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A CANADIAN NAVY.

BY WATSON GRIFFIN.

THE most important step in the evolution of the Canadian nation since the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway is the establishment of a Canadian navy which is to be provided for during the present session of the Dominion Parliament. The fact that Canada, although absolutely dependent upon the British navy for protection of a merchant marine that ranks fourth among the nations, has never contributed anything to the support of that navy has long been a matter of reproach. In the early years of the Confederation, when the revenues were small and the construction of the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railways and a costly system of canals was essential to the consolidation of the Dominion and the maintenance of the integrity of British North America as a part of the Empire, the British people bore the burden of the Imperial navy without grumbling, and Canadian self-respect was satisfied by the argument that in building a transcontinental railway, available for the rapid transportation of British soldiers and sailors from the Atlantic to the Pacific, Canada was contributing more to the strength of the Empire than it could do by expending the same amount of money on war-ships. But this excuse is no longer available. Canada is growing in population and wealth at a wonderful rate; the whole country is prosperous; and nowhere else in the world are the masses of the people enjoying so many of the comforts and luxuries of life. It is true that two new transcontinental railway systems are now under construction and rapidly nearing completion, but it cannot be said that three railways across Canada, with branches in every direction, are necessary either for the maintenance of Canadian integrity or for the transportation of British troops. The railways now building are purely commercial undertakings.

Resolutions in favor of Canadian participation in Imperial defence were repeatedly passed by the Canadian Manufacturers Association and most of the Boards of Trade throughout the country year after year; navy leagues were formed; fervid appeals to Canadian pride were made by speakers at banquets and public meetings; but the Government did nothing until the German war scare in England so aroused public sentiment in Canada that when the Opposition leaders brought the question before the Dominion Parliament and urged the establishment of a Canadian navy, built in Canada, officered and manned by Canadians, but acting in co-operation with the British navy according to plans to be agreed upon by the Governments of Canada and Great Britain, Sir Wilfrid Laurier accepted the suggestion and a Government resolution, framed by Sir Wilfrid, was introduced and unanimously passed by the House of Commons at the last session of the Dominion Parliament. This was the joint resolution:

"This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in large measure the responsibilities of national defence. The House is of the opinion that, under the present constitutional relations between the mother country and the self-governing Dominions, the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the Imperial Treasury for naval and military purposes would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence.

"The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with, and in close relation to, the Imperial navy, along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial Conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire and the peace of the world.

"The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the Imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the honor of the Empire."

The Parliaments of New Zealand and the Australian Commonwealth had already passed resolutions showing their willingness to join in the naval defence of the Empire. The British Government, anxious to take advantage of the spontaneous offers of assistance from the three self-governing Dominions of the Empire, called a naval conference in London. The Canadian Government sent to that Conference the Minister of Marine and

the Minister of Militia, and the other Dominions were also represented. The exact details of the proceedings at the Conference have not been made public, but it is understood that an agreement was arrived at by which Canada and Australia will immediately establish navies of their own to act in concert with the British navy, while New Zealand will make an annual cash contribution to the British Government in payment for naval protection. While the Liberal and Conservative leaders and their followers in the Dominion Parliament were able to agree upon a resolution regarding a naval policy, there is much difference of opinion on the question in the ranks of both political parties in the country at large.

In considering the attitude of the Canadian people on this question, it must be remembered that nearly one-third of the population of Canada is of French origin. The majority of the French-Canadians are loyal to the British Empire; they are fond of quoting a remark of the late Sir Etienne Pascal Taché: "*Le dernier coup du canon tiré pour la défense du drapeau britannique sur cette terre d'Amerique le sera par un canadien-français*" ("The last shot fired in America in defence of the British flag will be fired by a French-Canadian"); but they are very jealous for the maintenance of Canadian autonomy and apt to be suspicious of proposals for Canadian participation in Imperial defence, fearing that Canada may be dragged into unnecessary and unjustifiable wars.

Since the Naval Conference in London many of the French-Canadian Liberal newspapers and some of the French-Canadian Conservative papers have expressed disapproval of the proposed expenditures for naval defence. Some of the French-Canadian Liberal newspapers are advocating a plebiscite on the question. It is recalled that Sir Wilfrid Laurier got rid of the embarrassing prohibition question by means of a plebiscite. The plebiscite resulted in a prohibition majority for the Dominion as a whole, every one of the English-speaking provinces voting in favor of prohibition, but the French-Canadian province of Quebec voted overwhelmingly against it and the measure was killed.

Anti-Imperialism has never had so strong a hold among French-Canadian Conservatives as among the Nationalists, who form the backbone of the French-Canadian Liberal organization. But Mr. F. D. Monk, M.P., for Jacques Cartier, who has for some

time been regarded as the leader of the French-Canadian Conservatives, speaking at Lachine on November 8th, strongly condemned the proposed Canadian navy on the ground that Canada did not need naval protection and could not afford such a luxury. He declared that the plan proposed would mean the sacrifice of Canadian autonomy.

It has been stated that a number of the Liberal members of the House of Commons, both English and French speaking, including several members of the Cabinet, agreed to the joint resolution with the understanding that it was merely intended as a means of shelving the question and that no immediate action would be taken. However, as the resolution called for "speedy" action, it is difficult to believe that there could have been any misunderstanding.

The Hon. Mackenzie King, Minister of Labor in the Laurier Cabinet, who claims descent from William Lyon Mackenzie, leader of the rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada, is reported to have publicly expressed himself as strongly opposed to any increased expenditure for either military or naval purposes.

The Hon. Charles Murphy, Secretary of State in the Laurier Cabinet, after a trip through the Northwest, declared that, "What the West wants is box-cars and not battleships." Duncan C. Ross, the Liberal candidate in the Middlesex by-election campaign now in progress, speaking on the same platform with the Minister of Railways and Canals, said that in view of the large amount of money required for the transcontinental railway the Government should go slowly in the expenditure of money for naval purposes. He thought "the war scare was all wind and newspaper talk."

A deputation from the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada went to Ottawa to tell Sir Wilfrid Laurier that their organization was opposed to the expenditure of public money for naval purposes. The officers of this labor organization have always been in sympathy with the Liberal party, and the leader of this deputation was one of the Liberal candidates for Toronto in the last general election. Sir Wilfrid Laurier frankly told these labor leaders that the Government must stand by its naval policy.

Many of the English-speaking Liberals are opposed to any expenditure of Canadian money for naval or military purposes, arguing that such expenditures may provoke war and that they place an

altogether unnecessary burden of taxation upon the Canadian people, as there can be no danger of war with the United States, and the Americans will never permit any other nation to invade Canada, because such an invasion would be a violation of the Monroe doctrine. "England does not need our aid," they say. "If she ever does, we will spend our last cent and shed the last drop of blood in our veins in her defence." But it is probable that a large majority of the English-speaking Liberals heartily approve the proposal to build a Canadian navy, and even the minority, who grumble at the expenditure and condemn all preparations for war as un-Christian, will unwaveringly support Sir Wilfrid Laurier in any policy he may decide upon, just as they support him in maintaining the policy of protection, although they call themselves free-traders and unceasingly denounce protection.

On the other hand, the English-speaking Conservatives are unanimous in the belief that Canada should participate in the naval defence of the Empire; they have condemned the argument that the Monroe doctrine is a sufficient protection for Canada, declaring that it is as mean and humiliating for Canadians to expect American taxpayers to pay the cost of protecting Canada against foreign aggression as it is to allow the overburdened British taxpayers to pay the bills; but they are divided in opinion as to the way in which Canadian money should be expended for this purpose, an influential minority of the party being disposed to criticise the Conservative leader, Robert L. Borden, for his advocacy of a Canadian-built navy in preference to an annual money contribution to the British Government in payment for naval protection.

The Conservative leader has plainly stated that he will not recede from the stand he has taken in favor of a powerful and effective Canadian unit of the Imperial navy, but he says there is nothing in the resolution passed by Parliament to prevent a special money contribution to the British Government if any emergency should arise before the Canadian navy is ready for action.

It is altogether unlikely that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will abandon a policy unanimously endorsed by both parties in the Canadian Parliament and approved by the British Government at the Colonial Conference, but the objections of his own followers and the difference of opinion among the Conservatives may cause him

to favor such a modest expenditure that the Canadian navy will not in the near future add materially to the strength of the Empire.

The policy which was agreed upon by the Liberal and Conservative leaders is in accordance with the naval plan outlined by Mr. George E. Drummond, as representative of the Canadian Manufacturers Association and the Montreal Board of Trade, before the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire at their meeting in Montreal in August, 1903, and approved by that great body of British business men. It has been endorsed by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford and Lord Milner as more satisfactory than a money contribution. It meets the views of so great a naval authority as Admiral Sir John C. R. Colomb, who some years ago advocated the establishment of ship-yards, arsenals and supply depots in Canada and Australia. Sir John said:

"Although since the Napoleonic wars a whole hemisphere has been added to British responsibilities, we ignore the fact in our naval policy of to-day. Producing power to meet naval requirements in the other hemisphere is localized and limited to one island in this. Every ship, however small; almost every appliance, however insignificant; every gun, rifle or revolver, every pound of powder, and every shot required for naval purposes at the other side of the world must be produced at home and pass over half the circumference of the globe to their destination. That is our policy and our practice. Can it be fairly said it is unavoidable, in view of the fact that the Dominion of Canada and Australia are integral portions of our Empire with seaboard on the Pacific? They are rapidly developing in the pursuit of wealth and manufacturing power rivalling our own.

"Those who assert that this policy we pursue is unavoidable and inevitable are bound to explain why Australia and Canada so differ from the United States and Japan as to forbid of the establishment in these great limbs of the Empire of the means of production and manufacture necessary for war which these foreign states possess. The truth is our present policy of centralizing the manufacture and supply of appliances and munitions of war to meet not merely naval, but military, requirements of a world state is wholly indefensible and fraught with peril."

So long as the British people pay the whole cost of the naval defence of the Empire, the building and equipment of war-ships must be concentrated within that little island. The enormous cost of the navy could not have been borne for so many years by British taxpayers if the money had been sent out of the country to pay for ships and munitions of war produced in distant parts

of the Empire. The money has remained in circulation in Britain, giving employment there not only to ship-builders, but to many tributary trades. Speaking at the Colonial Conference of 1902 regarding the heavy burden borne by the British taxpayer for defence of the world-wide Empire, Mr. Chamberlain said: "The weary Titan groans beneath the orb of his too vast fate." Let me add that he would have been completely crushed by it long ago if the money expended in war-ships had gone out of the country. And if it is true that the British people could not afford to pay for war-ships built in Canada, it is equally true that it would be a serious burden for Canadians to pay for war-ships built in England. As a permanent policy it would be unbearable, but in an emergency it may be necessary, owing to the long delay of our Government in assuming the responsibility of constructing a Canadian navy. The statesmen of England of both political parties seem to be really alarmed at the war preparations of Germany. Our safety lies in immediately making the Imperial navy so strong as to insure peace. Before war-ships can be built in Canada, ship-yards must be got ready. Meanwhile the Germans are building "Dreadnoughts," and it is feared that in 1912 they may have more of those great ships than the British. Have the British ship-yards the capacity to build more "Dreadnoughts" during the next two years than have been already contracted for? Does the number of such ships to be built depend entirely upon the amount of money at the disposal of the British Government? If the British ship-yards adapted for the construction of "Dreadnoughts" are not being worked to their full capacity, it is the duty of Canada in this emergency to make up for past neglect by ordering two or three "Dreadnoughts" in England while the Canadian ship-yards are being got ready for operation. Canada should pay not only the cost of building these "Dreadnoughts" in England, but also the full cost of maintaining them, asking the British Government to supply officers and men until Canadians can be trained for the service.

As regards the alleged incapacity of Canadians to build and manage a navy, the Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern railways, the great Canadian banking and insurance systems, Niagara power development and many others of our enterprises bear testimony to the organizing ability of Canadians.

If instead of having a Canadian naval unit we simply made

an annual contribution to the British navy, not only the amount of the contribution, but the principle of paying tribute, would be fought over at every session of Parliament. Instead of arousing national pride and British sentiment, it would create jealousy and ill-feeling between the different elements of Canada's population. But a Canadian navy once established will be considered as much a matter of course as our militia force is at present.

With reference to the charge that if our new navy is under Canadian control French-Canadian influence will prevent its being of service to the Empire in the hour of need, it is only necessary to say that French-Canadian influence did not prevent the sending of a number of Canadian contingents to help the British army in South Africa, although it was felt that there was no real need of Canadian assistance in fighting a few Boers. There is little doubt that if Britain were actually at war with the populous, wealthy and well-organized German Empire or any other great Power the whole Canadian people, regardless of origin and language, would support the British cause, but even if the French-Canadian section of the population did offer opposition the English-speaking majority, divided politically in time of peace, would be united in time of war.

The present difference of opinion is largely due to the belief that there is no real danger of war. But if war should come without previous preparation, Canadian sympathy would be of little value to Britain.

Mr. Goldwin Smith is reported to have said that if Canada has a navy "it will be necessary to determine very clearly with whom is to rest the declaration of war." The existence of a Canadian navy will not in any way affect Canada's liability to be included in any British war. Whether we have a navy of our own or pay the British Government for protection or continue to pay nothing in any way for naval purposes so long as Canada is part of the British Empire, it will be liable to attack from any nation with which Britain is at war and we may be sure that the enemy will not hesitate to strike that part of the Empire which is most vulnerable and least prepared for war. But when Canada shows its willingness to bear a fair share of the cost of defending the Empire, the King will not agree to a declaration of war without consulting the Government of our Dominion.

WATSON GRIFFIN.